

to be easily carried in the pocket. In view of the many 'manuals' and 'handbooks' of British birds, its compact form and small size must be its main *raison d'être*. There is no introductory matter beyond the preface, no diagnoses of the higher groups, no analytical keys, no general analysis of the avifauna as regards the manner of occurrence of the species, and, finally, no index! As 381 species and about a dozen additional subspecies are treated in the course of 208 pages, the descriptions are necessarily brief and the biographical matter is reduced to a minimum. Nevertheless it must serve as a "handy textbook of reference" to those who have already some knowledge of British birds, but hardly as the most convenient form of a manual for the beginner. Some 30 species usually included in British lists are "provisionally excluded," being relegated to a nominal list in the Appendix, on the ground that their "recorded occurrences are either insufficiently authenticated or somewhat improbable."

The classification and nomenclature is practically that of the B. O. U. List, "but a number of necessary alterations have been made, particularly in the matter of adopting the specific names of the *first* describers as far as possible. An effort has also been made to allow specific rank to valid species only, while subspecies or races, instead of being nameless, are distinguished by sub-numbers and trinomials—after the American style." He adds that he does not expect to "escape censure for adopting the despised system, yet until some of our ornithologists can suggest some other way of allowing a name to a recognized race without giving it the rank of a species, I will adhere to trinomials." He says further that with the exception of the late Henry Seebohm, "no British ornithologist appears to have openly avowed himself a trinomialist." He is not, however, quite so destitute of good company as a trinomialist among his own countrymen as he seems to suppose, as witness the use of trinomials by numerous British naturalists, and their recent formal approval by Mr. Sclater (see above, p. 327) — J. A. A.

Loomis on California Water Birds.¹—Mr. Loomis continues his studies of the Water Birds of the Californian coast by a visit to South Farallon Island from July 8 to 16, 1896. Interesting notes are given on the habits of the ten species of Water Birds found nesting there, with remarks on four so-called "non-indigenous" species.

Speaking of the wholesale robbery of Murres' eggs to supply the San Francisco market, Mr. Loomis says: "It is apparent that unless this devastation is put an end to, the Farallon Murre rookeries will ere long belong to the past. A State law prohibiting the sale of eggs of wild birds and prompt action on the part of the lighthouse board will preserve this

¹ California Water Birds. No. III. South Farallon Island in July. By Leverett M. Loomis, Curator of the Department of Ornithology. Proc. Cal. Acad. Sci., Ser. 2, Vol. XI, pp. 353-366, 2 maps.

wonderful marine aviary — second to none of the natural features of California." In 1884 it is said 300,000 eggs were gathered and the market was glutted, while the present year only 91,740 have been taken. Comparatively few birds are allowed to breed and such merciless persecution can but result in extinction. The commercial value of these rookeries will doubtless prevent their protection from purely sentimental grounds, but if it can be shown that the present course will end in the destruction of the egg industry, it might be possible to secure the enactment of a law which would protect the birds for at least the latter half of the nesting season.— F. M. C.

Ridgway on New Species and Subspecies of Birds¹.—In the three papers here cited, none of which bears date of publication, Mr. Ridgway describes *Geothlypis flaveolatus* from near Tampico on the Gulf coast of Mexico, a form which, strangely enough, is most closely related to *G. beldingi* of Lower California; *Geospiza pachyryncha*, *G. fatigata*, *Camarhynchus bindloei*, *C. compressirostris*, and *C. incertus* from the apparently exhaustless Galapagos, and *Peucedramus olivaceus aurantiacus* from Guatemala.— F. M. C.

Oberholser on Two New Subspecies of Dryobates.²—Comparison of a series of 200 Downy Woodpeckers has impressed Mr. Oberholser with the differences in size and color existing between specimens from the South Atlantic and Gulf States and those from Alaska and northern British America, and he therefore separates these extremes under the names *Dryobates pubescens meridionalis* (Swainson) and *Dryobates pubescens nelsoni* (Oberholser) respectively, leaving *Dryobates pubescens* as a transition form occupying the intervening region.— F. M. C.

Richmond on Mexican Birds.³—This is a nominal list of 58 species, with the number of specimens of each, received by the National Museum

¹ 1. Description of a New Species of Ground Warbler from Eastern Mexico. By Robert Ridgway, Curator of the Department of Birds. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XVIII, p. 119.

2. Preliminary Description of some New Birds from the Galapagos Archipelago. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

3. Description of a New Subspecies of the Genus *Peucedramus*, Coues. *Ibid.*, p. 441.

² Description of Two New Subspecies of the Downy Woodpecker, *Dryobates pubescens* (Linnaeus). By Harry C. Oberholser. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XVIII, 1895, p. 547.

³ Partial list of Birds collected at Alta Mira, Mexico, by Mr. Frank B. Armstrong. By Charles W. Richmond, Assistant Curator of the Department of Birds. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XVIII, 1896, pp. 627-632.